Public Assistance Delivery Model Overview for Applicants

This Quick Guide explains **updates to the process FEMA uses to deliver the Public Assistance Program.** The Public Assistance Program provides federal grant assistance so that communities can quickly respond to and recover from major disasters or emergencies declared by the President.
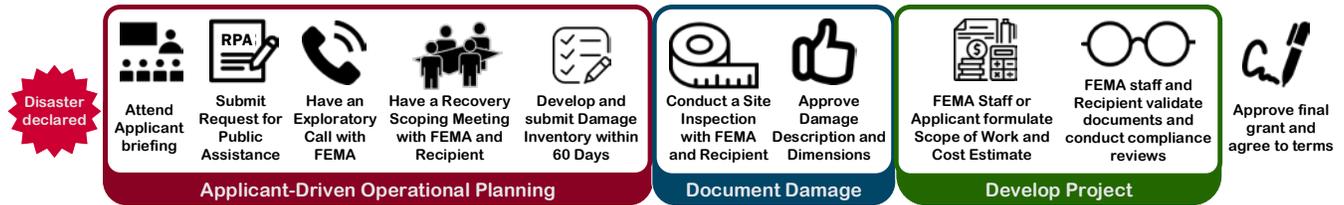
What is the Public Assistance delivery model?

The **Public Assistance program delivery model** is FEMA's process to plan, develop, and award Public Assistance grants. From 2014 to 2017, FEMA redesigned the program delivery model to address concerns about timeliness, transparency, and process complexity. The delivery model seeks to improve customer service, reduce costs, and reduce funding errors. The five goals are to: increase simplicity, increase accuracy, increase efficiency, improve timeliness and improve accessibility of the program.

> **Recipient**
> State, tribe or territory that receives and administers the Public Assistance Federal award.
>
> **Applicant**
> State, local, tribal, or territorial government or eligible private non-profit entity submitting a request for assistance under the Recipient's Federal award.

The Public Assistance Program Delivery Process

Disaster declared — Attend Applicant briefing — Submit Request for Public Assistance — Have an Exploratory Call with FEMA — Have a Recovery Scoping Meeting with FEMA and Recipient — Develop and submit Damage Inventory within 60 Days | **Applicant-Driven Operational Planning**

Conduct a Site Inspection with FEMA and Recipient — Approve Damage Description and Dimensions | **Document Damage**

FEMA Staff or Applicant formulate Scope of Work and Cost Estimate — FEMA staff and Recipient validate documents and conduct compliance reviews | **Develop Project**

Approve final grant and agree to terms

What changed about the delivery model?

In general, changes to the delivery model involve four themes:

- **Consolidation:** Co-locating technical resources and staff with specific expertise in locations that serve all Public Assistance operations across the country.
- **Specialization:** Simplifying roles of FEMA Public Assistance staff so the right people, with the right skills, are assigned to the right task, at the right time. Tailoring training and development to the specific roles that staff perform.
- **Standardization:** Improving reliability through technology by normalizing systems and work flows, and creating templates, checklists, and job aids for use throughout the process.
- **Segmentation:** Simplifying the steps of grant development and ensuring level of effort is based on risk, infrastructure complexity, and type of work.
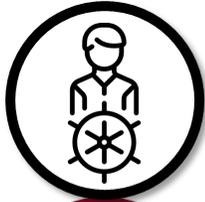
Applicants have a central point of contact—a **Program Delivery Manager**—to help navigate the process. Applicants and FEMA staff use an online system called **Grants Portal** to improve transparency of grant development. In addition, FEMA is dedicated to **continuous improvement** of the Public Assistance Program delivery process and is actively monitoring progress, receiving feedback, and improving processes and tools.

What did not change?

- **Laws, regulations, policy:** FEMA uses the same requirements to determine eligibility.
- **Applicant role:** Applicants remain responsible for documenting eligibility, performing emergency work, and driving recovery to meet the community's needs.
- **Recipient role**: Recipients still manage recovery and distribute award funding to Applicants.

What is an Applicant's role in the award process?

> **Project**
> A logical grouping of disaster damage, the scope of work an Applicant will complete to address the damage, and the estimated funding.

Drive Community Recovery
Set priorities and move the recovery process forward. Applicants identify ways to best meet the community's needs and ensure progress is made towards recovery.

Request Public Assistance
Submit a Request for Public Assistance to begin the grant application process. This form, submitted through the Recipient, is the official mechanism by which a potential Applicant requests and receives approval for Public Assistance funding.

Identify and Report Damage
Identify and report damage; discuss priorities with the FEMA Program Delivery Manager. Applicants ensure all damage is accurately recorded in a Damage Inventory. They should identify immediate needs and impacts to critical facilities.

Conduct Site Inspections
Participate in a site inspection to record details of the damage. If work is not complete, a FEMA Site Inspector will visit a damage site to collect information on the nature and dimensions of damage. Applicants must verify the damage description because it is the basis of a project's scope of work and cost estimate.

Submit Documents
Upload documents and information to Grants Portal. FEMA and the Applicant use documentation to support project eligibility, write a scope of work, and develop a cost estimate. Applicants must keep track of all work activities and costs and upload documentation into Grants Portal.

Review and Concur
Review the project and agree to the terms and conditions of funding. Once project scopes and costs are developed, Applicants review and agree to funding terms and requirements and sign the project. Audits and appeals processes exist to review environmental and historic preservation, contract, and insurance matters.

The *Quick Guide* series is a set of documents that explain the roles and responsibilities of Recipients and Applicants in key steps in FEMA's Public Assistance Program delivery process. The Public Assistance Program provides Federal grant funding to help communities quickly respond to and recover from major disasters or emergencies declared by the President. Read more about Public Assistance Program delivery in other Quick Guides, the Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide, and resources available on Grants Portal.